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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Wednesday, February 22, 1933

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Two All-American Dishes" Information approved by the Bureau of Home Economics, the Bureau of Chemistry and Soils, the Bureau of Plant Industry, U.S.D.A.

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If you grew up in New England or New York or Pennsylvania or Ohio, you don't have to be told that "sugaring-off" season begins during the latter half of February or the first part of March, just as the winter is breaking up, and the days are thawing and the nights frosty. Very early spring is the time when the sweet sap begins to rise in the maple trees and when our grandfathers set off for the sugar bush where they collected the sap in wooden troughs and boiled it down in huge iron kettles over an open fire. The production of maple sugar and sirup is a one-hundred-percent American industry. The United States and Canada are the only countries on earth where these products are made.

And do you know how this maple sugar business all started? Just the way a lot of other good American things started. From the Indians. The earliest explorers found the Indians making sugar from maple tree sap. Up along the St. Lawrence River they were producing it for trade. The white settlers soon learned the process from the Indians and improved on their crude methods. But beyond the tapping and boiling, the general process used today is the same as it was then.

Our ancestors had to depend entirely on maple sugar and honey for cooking and sweetening. The cane sugar was imported from the West Indies and was far too expensive a luxury for most families. Times change. The luxuries and necessities in the sugar line seem to have reversed themselves. Unless you live in sugar-maple country where you can get an inexpensive supply, maple sugar now is a luxury. Most of us use it chiefly as a flavoring or a confection.

The days of the picturesque log sugar camp, equipped with big black kettles, birch-bark tanks and wooden troughs, buckets and scoops have gone. So have the days when the sirup was tested for doneness, as we often do candy--by dropping it in cold water or letting it thread. The scientists have taken a hand and suggested modern tools and methods. Thermometers and hydrometers test the sirup. Great evaporators take the place of the big iron kettles. The new, carefully made product is somewhat different in color and flavor. Older methods made a dark, coarse, sometimes strong product. New methods make light yellow sirup and yellowish brown, firm sugar.

Maple sugar makes excellent flavoring and sweetening for the more delicate desserts like custards, tapioca or rice puddings, ice creams and cake frostings. A favorite use for the sirup is on hot griddle cakes, waffles, French toast, or biscuits. If the red maple sugar is difficult to get or expensive in your part of the world, you can make a good substitute by using sugar, either brown or white, and maple flavoring.

The recipe on our program today is for a quick maple sugar frosting, made in the double boiler over hot water. Have you a pencil handy? If you have, I'll stop right here and give you this delicious and easy recipe before I go on





to the menu for today.

The ingredients for the frosting are:

1 cup of maple sugar, or 1 cup of brown sugar and 1/2 teaspoon of maple flavoring.  
4 tablespoons of cold water  
1 egg white  
1/8 teaspoon of salt

I'll repeat that list of ingredients. (Repeat)

Put the sugar, the water and the unbeaten egg white together in the upper part of the double boiler. Have the water in the lower part boiling. Begin beating the mixture with a Dover egg beater at once and beat it constantly while it cooks for about 10 minutes. It should then look like ordinary boiled frosting and should be almost thick enough to spread. Take it from the stove, add the maple flavoring--if you are using flavoring--and continue to beat until the frosting has thickened enough to hold its shape on the beater. Put the frosting on only after the cake is cold. This amount should be enough to ice a two-layer cake.

That's the recipe. Now here's the low-cost menu for today. It features another all-American dish--fried scrapple. The menu: Fried scrapple; Tomatoes and onions stewed together; Buttered canned lima beans; and simple white cake with maple frosting. Once more. Fried scrapple; Stewed tomatoes and onions; Buttered canned lima beans; White cake with maple frosting.

Scrapple is a Pennsylvania dish which originated with the German settlers there. "Pennsylvania Dutch" housewives have long been famous as good and thrifty cooks. Scrapple is one of their low-cost dishes--a combination of pork and cereal mush. The genuine old-fashioned scrapple called for a young pig's head. Nowadays, we use any bony pieces of pork. Here's the way to make scrapple. Simmer about three pounds of pork in three quarts of water, until the meat drops from the bone. Then strain off the broth, remove the bone, and chop the meat fine. There should be about 2 quarts of broth. If necessary add water to make this quantity. Bring the broth to the boiling point. Slowly add 2 cups of cornmeal or cracked wheat. Cook until it is thick mush, stirring constantly. Now add the chopped meat, salt and any other seasoning, such as onion juice, sage or thyme. Pour the hot scrapple into oblong, enamelware pans which have been rinsed in cold water. Let it stand overnight until cold and firm. Slice it and brown the slices in a hot skillet.

Tomorrow we'll discuss inexpensive baby clothes.

